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Songs from the Nest

EARLY CHILDHOOD SONGS

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SONGS FROM THE NEST

Songs from the Nest

BY

EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER

AUTHOR OF

"For the Beloved"

"The Little Maid"



CHICAGO
KINDERGARTEN LITERATURE CO.

1894

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Motherhood.

*Sweet Mary! Mother of my Lord!
Through the faint light thy pictured face,
Touched with the glory and the grace
Born of the Angel's wondrous word,
Draws my eyes upward to its place.*

*What dost thou dream, O woman dear,
So late a child whose careless feet
Found the green paths of girlhood sweet,
Nor guessed what rapture, drawing near,
Would fold thy heart in bliss complete?*

*They ponder much, these mother souls
That clasp their secret close, nor tell
The strange, exulting thoughts that swell,
A soundless tide, whose fullness rolls
To shores where blessed visions dwell.*

*And since that hour when first for thee
The hope of all the ages smiled,
And love and loss were reconciled,
No mother's heart but thrills to see
A world's redeemer in her child.*

*Sweet Mary, if some glistening wing
Showed through the darkness, dim and pale,
And angel voices cried, "All hail!"
Lo, the swift days to thee shall bring,
Brimmed with love's wine, life's holy grail"—*

*I think I should but lift mine eyes,
And see again thy radiant face
Shine, still and tender, from its place,
And, grown like thee, serene and wise,
Should thank my Lord for that dear grace.*

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In Memory
OF
An Empty Nest.

“All the birdies have flown away;
But birds must fly, or they wouldn't have
wings;
And the mother knew they would go some
day,
When she used to cuddle the downy
things.”

YEMER
MEMORANDUM
ALGERIA

SONGS FROM THE NEST.

A Winter Rose.

When the meadows were chill and white,
Lily-buds heaped with the drifting snows,
Rough winds shaking the world at night,
Blossomed our fair little winter rose;

Soft and pink, from her tender feet
To her downy head and her dimpled chin
To her velvet hands and her mouth so sweet,
Shutting some blissful secret in.

We wrapped her in fleecy robes that clung,
Fold upon fold, as the roses rest;
And the dearest singer that ever sung,
Whispered a lullaby over her nest.

We drew the curtains to hide away
The chilly world, with its cruel snow;
And there, in a bower as bright as May,
Our dainty blossom began to grow.

Little Know-nothing.

Listen, my baby! nobody's near,
Only the kittens small;
I'll whisper something close in your ear,
You never must tell at all.

Two white kittens, with ball and string,
Race and tumble and play;
Isn't it strange—you queer little thing—
That you should know less than they?

You will not open your velvet fist,
Closed tight in a tiny ball;
You scowl when your soft pink mouth is
kissed,
And never kiss back at all.

Your eyes, with their lovely, misty blue,
Wander and wonder—oh, see!
The baby listens as if she knew!
The baby is smiling to me!

The First Tooth.

Come, look at the dainty darling!
As fresh as a new-blown rose,
From the top of his head so golden,
To the dear little restless toes.
You can tell by the dancing dimples,
By the smiles that come and go,
He is keeping a wonderful secret
You would give half your kingdom to
know.

Now kiss him on cheek and forehead,
And kiss him on lip and chin;
The little red mouth is hiding
The rarest of pearls within.
Ah, see! when the lips in smiling
Have parted their tender red,
Do you see the tiny white jewel,
Set deep in its coral bed?

Now where are the sage reporters
Who wait by hamlet and hill,
To tell to the listening nation
The news of its good or ill?
Come, weave with your idle gossip
This golden blossom of truth —
*Just half a year old this morning,
And one little pearly tooth!*

Cradle-song.

Baby, sleep! the summer breezes
Rock the young bird in the tree;
Mother's breast shall be thy pillow,
Mother's arms have cradled thee!
Down the rosy vales of slumber,
Soft and low the dream-bells ring;
Follow where their voices call thee,
While my cradle-song I sing.

Baby, sleep! the rose has folded
Half her sweetness from the night;
Sleep, and when the rose is fairest,
Thou shalt wake to new delight.
Sweeter, clearer, softer, nearer,
I can hear the dream-bells ring;
Follow where their voices call thee,
While my cradle-song I sing.

Baby, sleep! for brighter visions
Than thy mother's eyes can see,
Angel hands are swiftly bringing
From the silent land to thee.
Down the rosy vales of slumber,
Fairy chimes the dream-bells ring;
Baby, sleep; and sleeping listen,
While my cradle-song I sing.

Somewhere.

Brave little messenger, blue as the sky,
Swinging and caroling up in the tree,
Out of what happier land did you fly,
The spring's glad greeting to bring to me?
Blithe little heart, let us sing together;
Somewhere, always, is summer weather.

Somewhere, under the morning skies,
Buds and blossoms make haste to grow;
Roses blushing in crimson dyes,
Fair white lilies with hearts of snow.
Blithe little heart, let us sing together;
Somewhere, always, is summer weather.

Somewhere, under the sedges green,
Birds are brooding their callow young;
Dearer nestlings were never seen,
Gladder carols were never sung.
Blithe little heart, let us sing together;
Somewhere, always, is summer weather.

Hasten, snow of the apple trees;
Hasten, violets white and blue;
Hasten, breath of the balmy breeze;
Here is a blossom that waits for you!
Blithe little heart, let us sing together;
Somewhere, always, is summer weather.

Her Picture.

That's my baby: just that way
 Curls the soft hair on her brow;
I can feel its silken touch
 Thrilling through my fingers now.
 Strangers, though, must need be told
 How the ripples shine like gold.

That's her cheek — its very curve;
 Can you guess its rose-leaf glow?
And the dimple's merry play
 As the quick smiles come and go?
 And her laughter, low and clear,
 Like a bird's note thrilling near?

That's her mouth; but one should know
 How her breath comes warm and sweet,
And the little cooing sounds
 That her soft, red lips repeat,
 And the ecstasy of bliss
 In her light, uncertain kiss.

One should watch when slumber steals
 O'er those wondrous deeps of blue;
One should see how morning brings
 Life's great miracle anew,—
 Just as if her dreaming eyes
 Looked but now on Paradise.

Ah, my loving, human soul,
Fluttering near me, soaring far!
Sweet elusive, changeful thing,
Who can paint you as you are?
Only love, whose matchless art
Paints you hourly on her heart!

Baby's World.

Oh, what can we do for the baby,
To make her a birthday rare?
She came in the wintry weather,
When all the orchards were bare.

There is not a leaf in the garden,
And never a bird will sing,
And all in a row, from the branches,
The sharp little icicles swing.

Oh, nothing at all cares baby!
Her world is as warm as a nest;
And the song that her mother sings her
Is the music she loves best.

She laughs to hear at the casement
The bleak winds bluster and blow,
And the sharp little icicles swing and ring
Like crystal bells in a row.

Baby's Christening.

Sweetheart, thou hast no name,
Only such tender words as love can frame;
Christened anew with kisses every hour,—
Our pearl! our dove! our flower!

So we have come today,
A name in blessing on thy brow to lay,
Wreathing the font with buds of palest dyes,
And violets, like thine eyes.

Oh, child, we cannot see
All that the coming years may bring to thee;
If on thy path the dews drop cool and sweet,
Or thorns shall bruise thy feet.

And if our love could choose
Life's sweetest gifts, and all its ill refuse,
Perchance the treasures we should deem the
best
Would fill thee with unrest.

So we who love thee, dear,
Lift empty hands to One who waiteth near,
Saying, "In life or death, Thy will be done;
Bless Thou the little one!"

Out of the Nest.

Out on the porch, by the open door,
Sweet with roses and cool with shade
Baby is creeping over the floor—
Dear little winsome blue-eyed maid!

All about her the shadows dance,
All above her the roses swing;
Sunbeams in at the lattice glance,
Robins up in the branches sing.

Up at the blossoms her fingers reach,
Pleading sweeter than any words;
Cooing away, in her baby speech,
Sounds like the twitter of nestling birds.

Creeping, creeping over the floor,
Soon my birdie will find her wings,
Fluttering out at the open door,
Into the wonderful world of things:

Bloom of roses and balm of dew,
Brooks that babble and birds that call,
All things lovely and glad and new,
And the Father watching us over it all!

Asleep.

Hush! in tender dreams he lies,
All the world forgetting;
Slumber veileth from his eyes
Longing and regretting!

Idle hands above his breast
Reach no more for pleasures;
Light as drifted blooms they rest
Emptied of their treasures.

Soft he sleeps! no longer mine,
Though I watch beside him;
In his slumbers, half divine,
Holy angels guide him.

Baby, while the shadows creep,
Slumber on thy pillow,
Like a lily rocked to sleep
On the swaying billow.

When the rosy morning gleams,
From thy visions breaking,
Leave the happy land of dreams,
Mine again in waking.

Counting the Baby's Toes.

Dear little bare feet,
 Dimpled and white,
In your long nightgown
 Wrapped for the night,
Come, let me count all
 Your queer little toes,
Pink as the heart of
 A shell, or a rose.

One is a lady
 That sits in the sun,
Two is a baby,
 And *three* is a nun;
Four is a lily
 With innocent breast,
And *five* is a birdie
 Asleep on her nest.

Soft little feet! all
Your dimples I know.
Over and over
I've counted them so;
Baby, my darling,
If mother could choose,
Nothing should ever
Their tenderness bruise.

Six is a horseman
A-riding with speed,
Seven is his footman,
And *eight* is his steed;
Nine is the mother
So graceful and tall,
And *ten* is her wee one,
The darling of all.

Over your eyes drop
The curtains so white;
Dear little bare feet,
Rest till the light!

Baby Arithmetic.

Rosebud, dainty and fair to see,
Flower of the whole round world to me,
Come this way on your dancing feet;
Say, how much do you love me, Sweet?

Red little mouth drawn gravely down,
White brow wearing a puzzled frown,
Wise little baby Rose is she,
Trying to measure her love for me.

“I love you all the day and the night,
All the dark and the sunshine bright,
All the candy in every store,
All my dollars, and more and more.

“I love you farther than birdies go,
And faster than ever the wind can blow;
Over the tops of the mountains high,
All round the world — *way up to the sky.*”

Good-night.

Softly down the happy valley
Fades the lingering summer day;
On the hills its latest blushes
Die in rosy gleams away.
Bird and bee and blossom bright
Whisper low a sweet good-night!

Swallows to the steeples flying,
Sweep with silent wing along,
And the bees are trooping homeward
With a dull and drowsy song.
Bird and bee and blossom bright
Whisper low a sweet good-night!

Starry eyes! above your brightness
I can see the shadows creep;
Tender brow! across your whiteness
Falls the dusky wing of sleep.
Bird and bee and blossom bright
Whisper low a sweet good-night!

At the Window.

Floating through the twilight,
Dropping softly down,
Fall the fleecy snowflakes
On the meadows brown.

Birdie at the window,
Looks with laughing eyes,
Full of baby wonder,
Full of strange surprise.

Only one sweet summer
Birdie has been here;
Did you know that winter
Kills the roses, dear?

Darling little Birdie!
Nothing can she know
Of the summer glories
Hidden by the snow.

Still the heaven she came from
Smiles upon her dreams,
With its fadeless blossoms
And its cloudless gleams.

A Valentine.

Here's to my little maid
Whom I love well;
All her sweet, winsome ways
I cannot tell;
New graces she puts on
Each day and hour;
She grows within my heart—
My precious flower!

Here's to my little maid
Who loves me well;
All my fond thoughts for her
No tongue can tell.
I am her sweetheart true,
And she is mine;
She is the girl I choose
My Valentine.

Cradle Time.

Come hither, my baby, my darling,
My lily, my wonderful rose!
The white-bosomed flowers in the garden
Begin their soft petals to close.
The bees have gone home from the clover,
The swallows are under the eaves,
The whip-poor-will calls from the orchard,
Safe hid in the dusk of the leaves.

Come, baby, my beauty, my darling;
Your eyes they are heavy with sleep;
Your little red mouth has grown silent,
And scarcely its laughter can keep.
Lay off the white robe from your shoulders,
Unclasp the small shoes from your feet;
O daintiest blossom of Eden,
I kiss you, my lily, my sweet.

Do you feel the cool wind coming softly,
And see the young moon in the sky?
The clouds sailing over the sunset,
The bats flitting silently by?
Do you hear how the cattle are lowing
Along the green lane by the hill?
And the brook running over the pebbles
With music that never is still?

Now hush! while I sing to you, baby,
A song of the angels above,
That come on invisible pinions
To watch o'er the children they love.
So all through your beautiful dreaming
The voice of your mother shall creep,
Lest, hearing the harpings celestial,
Your soul should fly homeward in sleep.

The Empty Nest.

A home in a quiet country place,
Under the shadow of branches wide;
And a fair young mother with thoughtful face,
Sewing a seam by the window side.

The sunshine stretches across the floor,
The bright motes dance in its golden way,
And in and out, at the open door,
The children run in their busy play.

Guiding her needle with careless skill,
Her fingers fashion the garment white;
But weaving a fabric daintier still,
Her swift thoughts follow the needle's
flight.

Her heart lies hushed in her deep content,
Her lips are humming an old love lay;
And still, with its music softly blent,
She hears what the eager children say:

“We found it under the apple tree,—
A poor little empty yellowbird's nest;
See, it is round as a cup could be,
And lined with down from the mother's
breast.

“This is a leaf, all withered and dry,
That once was a canopy overhead;
Doesn't it almost make you cry
To look at the dear little empty bed?

“All the birdies have flown away;
But birds must fly, or they wouldn't have
wings;
And the mother knew they would go some
day,
When she used to cuddle the downy
things.

“Do you think she is lonesome? Why,
there's a tear!
And here is another—that makes two.
Why do you hug us, and look so queer?
If *we* were birdies we wouldn't leave *you*.”

Deep in the mother's listening heart
Drops the prattle with sudden sting;
For lips may quiver, and tears may start,
But *birds must fly, or they wouldn't have
wings.*

My Good-for-nothing.

What are you good for, my brave little man?
Answer that question for me if you can.
You, with your ringlets as bright as the sun,
You, with your fingers as white as a nun,
All the day long, with your busy contriving,
Into all mischief and fun you are driving;
See if your wise little noddle can tell
What you are good for; now ponder it well.

Over the carpet the dear little feet
Came with a patter, to climb on my seat.
Two merry eyes, full of frolic and glee,
Under their lashes looked up unto me;
Two dimpled hands, pressing soft on my face,
Drew me down close in a loving embrace;
Two rosy lips gave the answer so true:
“Good to love you, mamma, good to love
you.”

Into Dreamland.

In dusky shadows, cold and gray,
Dies slowly out the dreary day;
And faintly shining through the room,
The firelight scatters all the gloom.

Upon the rug before the grate,
With glowing cheeks the children wait,
And stretch their rosy, dimpled feet
To feel the embers' steady heat.

O happy hearts, whose thought portrays
Such wondrous pictures in the blaze!
A fairy land, whose gleaming sod
No mortal foot has ever trod.

In the soft hush of radiant dreams
Your feet may find those singing streams,
Those skies with sunshine always bright—
Dear, dreaming eyes! a sweet good-night.

Twilight Fancies.

Little one, here in the twilight,
Nestled against my heart,
With wondering eyes uplifted,
And questioning lips apart,
Surely a sweeter wisdom
Than old philosophers teach
Lies in the childish fancies
Dropped from your silver speech!

“I see a beautiful angel
With wings and a shining dress;
He’s flying away from the sundown
To light up the stars, I guess.
The robin up in the tree top
Is trying to sing his prayer;
If I should sing ‘Now I lay me’
Do you think that the Lord would care?

“If I were away up yonder,
Close by that twinkling star,
Do you think you could see me, mamma,
And I could see you, so far?
If no one has been to heaven,
I don’t see how they can tell;
But little girls might get lonesome
Who don’t know God very well.

“Just see how the stars are winking,
And the moon is nodding her head;
At night, when there's nobody looking,
Does she creep in a cloud to bed?
Now sing me about the mother
Shaking the dreamland tree;
I'll open my eyes and tell you
If a little dream falls for me.”

Hang Up the Baby's Stocking.

Hang up the baby's stocking;
Be sure that you don't forget;
The dear little dimpled darling!
She never saw Christmas yet.
But I've told her all about it;
And she opened her big blue eyes,
And I'm sure that she understood me,
She looked so funny and wise.

Dear, dear! what a tiny stocking!
It doesn't take much to hold
Such little pink toes as baby's
Away from the frost and cold;
But then, for the baby's Christmas
It never would do at all.
Why, Santa Claus wouldn't be looking
For anything half so small.

I know what we'll do for the baby;
I've thought of the very best plan:
I'll borrow a stocking of grandma,—
The longest that ever I can,—
And you'll hang it by mine, dear mamma,
Right here in the corner—so;
And write a letter to Santa
And fasten it onto the toe.

Write, "*This is the baby's stocking,
That hangs in the corner here ;
You never have seen her, Santa,
For she only came this year ;
But she's just the darlingest baby !
And now, before you go,
Just cram her stocking with goodies,
From the top clear down to the toe.*"

Mysteries.

Where are you going, dear little feet?
Restless, pattering things!
Bearing your burden soft and sweet,
Swift as the swallow's wings.

What are you doing, dear little hands?
Busy from morn till night;
Building your castles on the sands,
Gathering blossoms bright.

What are you saying, dear little tongue?
Chattering all day long;
Words that the wild birds teach their young,
Sweeter than speech or song.

What are you seeking, questioning eyes?
Gazing away to the west;
Watching the rosy sunset skies,
When day is sinking to rest.

Ah, little pilgrim, tender and true,
Wonderful quest is yours!
Life must be sweet when life is new,
Long as the world endures.

My Laddie.

My bonny, yellow-haired laddie
Is sailing his boats by the shore;
And never such wonderful cargoes
Went over the water before.

And always the sun is shining,
And always the tide it flows,
To bear them away from the harbor,
To a land that my sailor knows.

My laddie! my bonny laddie!
There's a ship coming over the sea,
Her sails in the light wind shifting,
To bear you away from me—

Away from the quiet harbor,
Where soft waves ripple and swell;
And what may lie on her outward track
There is not a chart to tell.

My laddie! my own dear laddie!
My heart is heavy today
To think of the wide, wide waters,
And the ships that have gone astray.

For how shall I smile at morning,
Or how shall I sleep at night,
And miss the sound of your laughter,
The glint of your locks so bright?

But if, from a stormy voyage,
Broken with wind and wrack,
To the port she left with the flowing tide,
Your ship beats wearily back;

Though her decks are swept by tempests,
And her sails hang rent above,
She will bear one treasure safely,—
The wealth of a mother's love.

A Child's Fancy.

Rosebud lay in her trundle-bed,
With her small hands folded above her head,
And fixed her innocent eyes on me,
While a thoughtful shadow came over their
 glee.

“Mamma,” she said, “when I go to sleep,
I pray to the Father my soul to keep;
And He comes and carries it far away,
To the beautiful home where His angels stay.

“I gather red roses, and lilies white;
I sing with the angels through all the night;
And when, in the morning, I wake from my
 sleep,
He gives back the soul that I gave Him to
 keep;
And I only remember, like beautiful dreams,
The garlands of lilies, the wonderful streams.”

Two Years Old.

One — two — my little maiden
Sitting in the sun,
With your blue eyes full of wonder,
Life is just begun!

One — two — you cannot count it
On your fingers white;
Sum of all your earthly being,
Sorrow, and delight!

One — two — my little maiden,
If the sum shall grow
Here on earth or there in heaven,
Only One can know!

My Queen.

What shall the New Year bring you,
Dear little baby Nell?
Choose from his gifts and treasures
Something to please you well:

Gems for your brow so tender,
Rings for your fingers white,
Robes for your dainty wearing,
Rich and costly and bright?

Dear little laughing Nellie
Looks in my eyes with glee;
Nothing she cares for jewels;
Queen of my heart is she!

Nothing she cares for raiment
Rich and costly and rare;
Close in my arms I fold her,
Kissing her shining hair.

Year after year shall bring her
Treasures of love untold,
And the bud shall grow to a blossom,
As the New Years follow the Old.

March Winds.

Listen, Kitty, my darling!
Here by the fireside bright;
Do you know what the winds are saying,
Abroad in the gusty night?

Moaning under the windows,
Tossing the scurrying leaves,
Making the maples shiver
And creak at the cottage eaves?

Listen, Kitty, my darling!
The winds are singing a song
Of the spring that is softly stealing
From summer lands along.

The snowdrops smile as they hear it,
A smile for the spring's sweet sake;
And the shy little violets whisper,
"We hear! we are broad awake!"

No matter, Kitty, my darling,
Though March winds drearily blow,
I am sure that the daisies are stirring
In their beds down under the snow.

In spite of the blustering weather,
The crocus is budding again;
And the daffodils whisper together,
And wait for the April rain.

April Fools.

Shy little pansies
Tucked away to sleep,
Wrapped in brown blankets
Piled close and deep,
Heard in a daydream
A bird singing clear:
“Wake, little sweethearts!
The springtime is here!”

Glad little pansies,
Stirring from their sleep,
Shook the brown blankets
Off for a peep;
Put on their velvet hoods,
Purple and gold,
And stood all a-tremble,
Abroad in the cold.

Snowflakes were flying,
Skies were grim and gray,
Bluebird and robin
Had scurried away.
Only the cruel wind
Laughed, as it said,
“Poor little April fools!
Hurry back to bed!”

Soft chins a-quiver,
 Dark eyes full of tears —
Brave little pansies,
 Spite of their fears,
Said, “Let us wait for
 The sunshiny weather;
Take hold of hands, dears,
 And cuddle close together.”

The Bluebird.

I know the song that the bluebird is singing
Out in the apple tree where he is swinging.
Brave little fellow! the skies may be dreary;
Nothing cares he while his heart is so cheery.

Hark! how the music leaps out from his throat.
Hark! was there ever so merry a note?
Listen awhile and you'll hear what he's
saying
Up in the apple tree swinging and swaying:

“Dear little blossoms down under the snow,
You must be weary of winter, I know;
Hark! while I sing you a message of cheer:
Summer is coming, and springtime is here.

Little white snowdrop! I pray you arise;
Bright yellow crocus! come, open your eyes;
Daffodils! daffodils! say, do you hear?
Summer is coming, and springtime is here!

A-Maying.

Oh, Nellie, with your little feet
Among the clovers straying!
You watch across the meadows sweet
The yellow sunshine playing!
Then come with me where woods are green,
And merry waters glide between,
And you shall be my bonny queen,
While we go gayly Maying.

Oh, Nellie, with your eyes that see
A world of summer gladness!
Where all the songs are full of glee,
Without a note of sadness,
Today, with heart as light as thine,
I take thy little hand in mine,
And taste again youth's golden wine
As we go gayly Maying.

Oh, Nellie, with your heart that keeps
Its blessed childhood holy,
And learns from nature lessons deep,
With rev'rence sweet and lowly!
Let those who will, be sad and say
This life is but a changeful day;
We'll treasure every golden ray
As we go gayly Maying.

Tight Heart.

When willows wear their robes of green,
When meadow-sweet is springing,
When winds that run along the slopes
Set all the bluebells swinging,—
Then to hail the gladsome weather,
Sing my heart and I together:
“Clouds may hide the radiant skies,
Yet the sunshine never dies!”

When woodlands hide their waxen blooms—
The dearer for their fleetness—
And orchards breathe their rare perfumes,
To lade the air with sweetness,—
Then to hail the gladsome weather,
Sing my heart and I together:
“Clouds may hide the radiant skies,
Yet the sunshine never dies!”

Sometimes the storm is dark above,
Sometimes the rain is chilling;
And not a bird in all the tree
His merry note is trilling;
Yet in spite of dreary weather,
Sing my heart and I together:
“Clouds may hide the radiant skies,
Yet the sunshine never dies!”

June.

On the windy hillsides
 Daisies whitely blow,
While above them softly
 Shade and sunshine go.

Birds their young are brooding
 In the orchard trees;
In the fields of clover
 Hum the drowsy bees.

Through the tender grasses
 Barefoot children run,
Fanned by summer breezes,
 Kissed by summer's sun;

All their pulses throbbing
 To one blissful tune,
All their days at dawning,
 All their months are June!

The Swallows.

The robin may warble his merriest tune,
The leaves may be green on the tree,
But the blithe little swallow will wait for the
June;
For the bird of the summer is he.

As swift as the light he is flashing along,
High up in the glimmering blue;
Then low at my feet, where the blossoms are
sweet,
And the meadows are sparkling with dew.

Oh, gay little rover! no shadow of fear,
No care for the morrow, have you;
You pass from our skies ere the autumn is
here,
To the land where the summer is new.

Say, how do you know when the skies are
aglow,
And the wind blowing soft through the
leaves?
Who shows you the way, through the night
and the day,
To your home by the sheltering eaves?

The robin may warble his merriest tune,
The leaves may be green on the tree;
But the blithe little swallow will wait for the
June;
For the bird of the summer is he.

The Robin's Vesper.

O Robin, singing in the tree,
While fades the daylight slowly,
Your vesper hymn floats down to me
Through twilight shadows holy.
The skies have caught a beauty new;
A softer light has touched their blue,
And evening's star is trembling through,
To watch while earth is sleeping.

O Robin, hush! till golden rays
Shall light the radiant morrow,
I sleep to dream of happy days,
Without a fear of sorrow.
For while I sleep my Father wakes;
His hand my sure protection makes;
His tender mercy ne'er forsakes,
Its watch above me keeping.

The Song of the Crickets.

Under the grass, in the bright summer weather,
We little crickets live gayly together;
When the morn shines, and the dew brightly
 glistens,
All the night long you may hear if you listen —
 “Cheep! cheep! cheep!”
We are the crickets that sing you to sleep.

We have no houses to store up our treasure.
Gay little minstrels, we live but for pleasure;
What shall we do when the summer is over?
When the keen frost nips the meadows of
 clover?
 Cheep! cheep! cheep!
Under the hearthstone for shelter we creep.

Then when the firelight is dancing and glow-
 ing,
Nothing we'll care how the winter is blowing;
Down in our snug little cells we will sing you
Songs of the brightness the summer will bring
 you.
 Cheep! cheep! cheep!
Summer is coming, though snows may be
 deep.

A Morning Song.

Have you heard the waters singing,
Little May,
Where the willows green are leaning
O'er their way?
Do you know how low and sweet
O'er the pebbles at their feet
Are the words the waves repeat
Night and day?

Have you heard the robins singing,
Little one,
When the rosy day is breaking —
When 'tis done?
Have you heard the wooing breeze
In the blossomed orchard trees,
And the drowsy hum of bees
In the sun?

All the earth is full of music,
Little May!
Bird and bee and water singing
On its way.
Let their silver voices fall
On thy heart with happy call,—
“Praise the Lord! who loveth all,
Night and day.”

The True Princess.

Sweetheart, in those dear days
 When you were smaller,
Your white brow just a lily's height,—
 No taller,—
Soon as, at dusk, the stars began to peep,
Into my arms my little maid would creep,
Pleading for stories ere she went to sleep.

There was one story, dear,—
 Do you remember?—
You chose from blossom-time
 To dull November:
About the Princess wandering in the wood,
And how beside the witch's door she stood,
Her elf-locks straggling from her tattered hood.

The witch, you know, dear girl,
 Was true and loyal;
Ready to help the Princess if she proved
 Right royal.
So when her flesh, through the deep downy
 bed,
Felt the small pea, and ached from toe to head,
"She's the blue blood," the wise old woman
 said.

Sweetheart, in those old days
 We hated preaching,
And never spoiled our pretty fairy tales
 With teaching;
But now that you have grown so tall and wise,
I think the fable to your steadfast eyes
Might seem a lesson in a quaint disguise.

For the true Princess still,
 Though clothed but meanly,
By her quick sense and tender heart
 Proves queenly.
She feels the trouble that she cannot see.
Dear, if the wise old woman chanced to be
Walking this way, would she know you and
 me?

Dame Dimple.

Little Dame Dimple, so merry and wise,
Shaking your tangled locks over your eyes,
What are you plotting this sunshiny day,
Under the apple tree over the way?

All the birds know you, you queer little elf.
Sometimes I think you're a birdie yourself,
Chasing the honeybees home as they pass,
Watching the crickets that chirp in the grass.

Where is your sunbonnet dainty and neat?
Where are the shoes for your bare little feet?
Little brown fingers that hid them so well,
What will you do if your secret I tell?

One chubby hand holds the frock at your knee
Filled full of treasures most wondrous to see:
Beetles that crawled in the dust at your feet,
Grasshoppers, pebbles, and clover-heads
sweet.

See! there's a butterfly gleaming like gold!
Down goes the frock with its riches untold!
Dear little Dimple, we older folks, too,
Drop our old treasures to reach for the new.

Chicks.

One, two, three little chickens!
Brown and yellow and white,
Bobbing about in this restless fashion,
Out of the nest tonight.
Three, four — if you don't keep quiet,
How can I count you right?

One, two — stop till I count you,
Dear little downy things,
Cuddling away from every danger,
Under the mother's wings!
“Wee! wee!” When the baby's sleepy
That is the song he sings.

One, two — say, can you count them,
Stupid old mother hen?
How do you know that under your feathers
Nestle your babies ten?
What if the cat comes slyly creeping?
How will you hide them then?

Ah me! ten little chickens,
Beautiful, downy balls!
Wait, little chicks, and don't be growing
Big, and bony, and tall.
Stay where the mother's wing can shelter,
Brooding over you all.

In the Garret.

Through the windows dim and dusty
 Shines the sun,
When the rosy day is breaking,
 When 'tis done;
And the cobwebs from the roof,
Hanging low their fairy woof,
Wave like banners in the glory, every one.

As I sit and idly listen
 By the door,
Faintest footfalls seem to patter
 On the floor;
And the rafters overhead
Echo back the merry tread
Of the children who have left us evermore.

From the cradle, waiting empty
 By the eaves,
Once again the blue-eyed baby
 Smiles and grieves,
And the mother's lips repeat
Tender rhymes to music sweet,
Like the song the wind is singing to the leaves.

The Children's Prayers.

When along the quiet valley
Morning sunbeams creep,
And the merry children waken
From their rosy sleep,
With their eager faces shining
In the golden ray,
And their restless fingers folded,
Hear them sweetly say :

“Father dear! through all the day
Kindly watch about our way,
Lest our careless feet should stray,
All thy love forgetting.”

When along the quiet valley
Slowly fades the day,
And the little children gather
Weary from their play,
Tender grow their happy faces,
Hushed their laughing glee,
While their voices softly murmur
By the mother's knee :

“Father dear! till morning light
Keep us, guard us through the night;
To thy kingdom pure and bright,
In thy mercy lead us!”

Ah, the blessed little children!
Day and night we know
Holy angels watch around them
All the way they go;
And the Father, never weary
Of their songs of praise,
From the glory smiles to listen
To the prayers they raise.

“Father dear! through every snare
Make the tender lambs thy care;
In thy bosom gently bear,
Lest the foe should find them.”

Little Bare Feet in the Snow.

Oh, children with beautiful faces
Untouched by the breath of the storm,
I hear the glad ring of your voices,
At play where the firelight is warm!
I think, as I sit in the gloaming,
And hear how the chilly winds blow,
Of poor little heads in the tempest,
And little bare feet in the snow!

Oh, children so tenderly sheltered,
So blest in your waking and sleep,
I think of the wan little faces
That sorrowful vigils must keep;
Unfed in their pitiful hunger,
Unsoothed in their terror and woe —
Oh, weak little hearts in the darkness!
And little bare feet in the snow!

Oh, once by the angels celestial
The wonderful story was told,
How Jesus, the Shepherd, came seeking
The lambs that were lost from His fold;
And they who would share in His glory,
Must follow His footsteps below,
To comfort the poor and the needy —
The little bare feet in the snow!

The Runaway Princess.

When, on all the wood-paths brown,
Red and gold the leaves dropped down,
Through the warm, sweet sunshine straying,
To my ear the wind came, saying:

“Hearken! can you understand
What’s amiss in Fairyland?”
Ding, dong! the bells are swinging.
Here is the town-crier ringing!

“Lost! lost!” you hear him say —
“Stolen or strayed away!
Strayed away from Buttercup town,
The fair little Princess Thistledown!”

All the Court had gone to dine,—
Knights and lords and ladies fine.
Through the open gateway straying,
Came a troop of minstrels playing.

One was a fiddler, shriveled and black;
One had a banjo over his back;
One was a piper, and one did naught
But dance to the tune, as a dancer ought.

First, the fiddler drew his bow,
Struck a chord so sweet and low,
Lords and ladies held their breath
In a silence deep as death.

Ding-a-ting! the banjo rang;
Up the lords and ladies sprang,
Round about the piper pressed —
“Ho, good piper, pipe your best!”

And they danced to the sound
In a merry go-round,
For never before had a minstrel band
Chanced to stray into Fairyland.

They filled their pockets with silver money;
They fed them on barley cakes and honey;
But when they were fairly out of the town,
They missed little Princess Thistledown.

“Call the crier! ring the bells!
Search through all the forest dells;
Here is silver, here is gold,
Here are precious gems untold;
He who finds the child may take
Half the kingdom for her sake!”

Bim! boom! comes a blustering fellow,
Dressed in black velvet slashed with yellow;
He's the king's trumpeter, out on the track
Of the wandering minstrels, to bring them
back.

But the fiddler is telling his beads by the fire,
In a cap and a gown, like a grizzly old friar.
The man with a banjo is deaf as a post,
The jolly old piper as thin as a ghost,

And the dancer is changed, by some magical
touch,
To a one-legged beggar that limps on his
crutch.

Then Mistress Gentian bent to look
At her own sweet image in the brook,
And whispered, "Nobody knows it, dear,
But I have the darling safely here."
And, dropping her fringes low, she said:
"I was tucking my babies into bed,
When the poor little princess chanced to pass,
Sobbing among the tangled grass;
Her silver mantle was ruffled and torn,
Her golden slippers were dusty and worn,
The bats had frightened her half to death,
The spiders chased her quite out of breath.
I fed her with honey, I washed her with dew,
I rocked her to sleep in my cradle of blue;
And I could tell, if I chose to say,
Who it was coaxed her to run away."

The mischievous Wind the cradle swung.
"Sleep, little lady, sleep!" he sung;
"What would they say if they only knew
It was I who ran away with you?"

The Old and the New.

Two bright heads in the corner,
Deep in the easy-chair;
One with a crown of yellow gold,
And one like the silver fair;
One with the morning's rosy flush,
And one with the twilight's tender hush.

“Where do the New Years come from?”

Asks Goldilocks in her glee;

“Do they sail in a pearly shallop

Across a wonderful sea —

A sea whose waters, with rainbows spanned,
Touch all the borders of fairyland?

“Do all the birds in that country

Keep singing by night and day?

Singing among the blossoms

That never wither away?

Will they let you feel, as you hold them near,
Their warm hearts beating, but not with fear?

“And the happy little children!

Do they wander as they will,

To gather the sweet wild roses,

And the strawberries on the hill,

With wings like butterflies all afloat,

And a purple cloud for a fairy boat?

“There surely is such a country;
I’ve seen it many a night,
Though I never, never could find it,
Awake in the morning light;
And that is the country over the sea,
Where the beautiful New Years wait for me.”

“Where do the New Years come from?”
Says grandpa, looking away
Through the frosty rime on the window,
To the distant hills so gray;
“They come from the country of youth, I know,
And they pass to the land of the long ago.

“And which is the fairest country,
Dear heart, I never could tell;
Where the New Years wait their dawning,
Or the beautiful Old Years dwell;
But the sweetest summers that ever shone,
To the land of the long ago have flown.

“The New Years wait for you, darling,
And the Old Years wait for me;
They have carried my dearest treasures
To the country over the sea —
The eyes that were brightest, the lips that
sung
The gladdest carols when life was young.

“But I know of a better country,
Where the Old Years all are new;
I shall find its shining pathway
Sooner, sweetheart, than you;
And I’ll send you a message of love and cheer
With every dawn of a glad New Year.”

The eyes of the dear old pilgrim
Are looking across the snows,
While closer nestles the merry face,
With its flush like a pink wild rose;
Dreaming together, the young and old,
Locks of silver and crown of gold.

Sweetheart's Stories.

“Come tell me a story, Sweetheart!
I've told you a thousand and one;
My brain has grown tired of weaving,
And all my fancies are spun.

“You must have a store of ditties,
And tales of mountain and sea.
You've heard them over and over;
Now tell them again to me.”

Then Sweetheart laughs, with a music
As merry as chiming bells;
Her blue eyes dance in the firelight,
And these are the stories she tells:

“Well — once on a time — a fairy
With wings like a rainbow, flew
Right into a little girl's window;
Now you tell: *what did she do?*

“And once, when the moon was shining, —
A wee little moon in the west, —
A little girl looked in the sky, and saw —
And saw — *you tell me the rest.*

“And once — there were awful rivers,
And woods, and mountains, you know;
And two little girls went a-walking —
You tell me: *where did they go?*”

Then sweetheart sighs as she nestles
Her dear yellow head on my breast:
“Little girls only know the beginnings;
But mammas, they know all the rest.”

A Taugh in Church.

She sat on the sliding cushion,
The dear wee woman of four;
Her feet in their shiny slippers
Hung dangling above the floor.
She meant to be good; she had promised;
And so, with her big brown eyes,
She stared at the meeting-house windows,
And counted the crawling flies.

She looked far up at the preacher;
But she thought of the honeybees
Droning away in the blossoms
That whitened the cherry trees.
She thought of the broken basket,
Where, curled in a dusky heap,
Three sleek, round puppies, with fringy ears,
Lay snuggled and fast asleep;

Such soft, warm bodies to cuddle,
Such queer little hearts to beat,
Such swift, red tongues to kiss you,
Such sprawling, cushiony feet!
She could feel in her clasping fingers
The touch of the satiny skin,
And a cold, wet nose exploring
The dimples under her chin.

Then a sudden ripple of laughter
 Ran over ner parted lips,
So swift that she could not catch it
 With her rosy finger tips.
The people whispered: "Bless the child!"
 As each one waked from a nap;
But the dear wee woman hid her face
 For shame, in her mother's lap.

Content.

Three little children at play in the meadow,
Merry as heart can be;
Watching the shadows floating over,
Chasing the honeybee;
Sucking the drops of nectar hidden
Deep in the clover cell,
Blowing the seeds of the downy thistle,
Guessing the daisies' spell.

Close by the door, the patient mother
Toileth the whole day long,
Smiling to see the children's frolic,
Thanking the Lord in song.
She has no share in the lordly acres
Stretching away from her door;
Shelter and food the Father sends her.
Why should she sigh for more?

Autumn.

The bees in the meadow are merrily humming,
The crickets chirp shrill on the lea;
The woodpecker down in the pasture is drum-
ming
A tune on the old beech tree;
I'll tell you a tale of the days that are coming;
The swallows have told it to me.

O bonny green trees! you are talking together
As if you could never grow old;
You whisper and laugh in the sunshiny weath-
er,
And all your green garlands unfold;
Do you know there's a king coming over the
heather
To deck you in crimson and gold?

O birds in the branches so merrily swaying,
You sing your glad songs in the sun;
Do you hear what the wise little swallows
are saying?
*"The beautiful summer is done!
Away while the blustering winds are delay-
ing;
'Tis time that our flight was begun."*

O blithe little swallows, the meadows of clo-
ver

Will blossom again for the bee;
You'll skim their green billows like gulls
flitting over

The white-crested caps of the sea;
For summer will bring back each gay little
rover

Again to the meadows and me.

A Birthday Rhyme.

My little maid, they say,
Is twelve years old today;
And so I send her
A birthday rhyme to tell
I love her dearly well,
With thoughts most tender.

I love her eyes so blue,
Her bonny brow so true,
Her smile so sunny,
Her dimples, soft and deep,
Her lips that kisses keep
Sweeter than honey.

My little maid today,
If I could have my way
Like Julius Cæsar,
Should choose from east or west,
Whatever she liked best,
A gift to please her.

Would she have gowns of silk,
Or laces white as milk?
Straight I would bring them.
Would she have jewels rare
To bind her yellow hair?
My hands should string them.

Or, maybe, she and I
To fairyland would fly,
Where gold is plenty,
And some small elfin voice
Would bid us take our choice
Of wishes twenty.

But were my little maid
In silks and gems arrayed,
It might so change her,
She would no longer be
A little lass to me,
But some proud stranger.

And so, perhaps, 'tis best
That Cæsar and the rest
Who ruled so many,
Wherever they may be,
Have never left to me
A single penny.

And though I oft have tried,
I never yet have spied
An elf or fairy,
Or anyone who knew
Exactly what to do
With folks so airy.

So I can only send
Good wishes without end,
Love without measure.
God teach my little Grace,
In every time and place,
To do His pleasure!

My Angel.

Slowly the night is falling,
 Falling down from the hill;
And all in the low green valley
 The dew lies heavy and chill.
The crickets cry in the hedges,
 And the bats are circling low;
And like ghosts in the blossoming garden,
 The glimmering night moths go.

Hand in hand, through the twilight,
 Come the children every one,
Flushed with their eager frolic,
 Tawny with wind and sun;
Home from the sunny uplands
 Where the sweet wild berries grow,
Home from the tangled thickets
 Where the nuts are ripening slow.

They mock at the wind's low sighing,
 And the cricket's lonesome cry;
At the tardy swallows flying
 Late through the darkening sky.
And silently gliding after,
 Through the dusk of the shadowy street,
Comes their little angel sister,
 Star-white from her head to her feet.

Never crossing the threshold,
Come they early or late,
With her empty hands on her bosom,
She stops at the cottage gate.
I stretch out my arms in longing,
But she fades from my aching sight,
As a little white cloud at morning
Vanishes into the light.

And spite of the shining garments
Folded about her now,
And spite of the deathless beauty
Crowning her lip and brow,
I wish, for one passionate moment,
She sat on my knee again,
On her feet, so spotless and tender,
The dust and the earthly stain.

For missing her morning and evening,
The bitterest thought must be,
That, safe with her blessed kindred,
The child hath no need of me.
And counting her heavenly birthdays,
I say, in my jealous care :
“The babe that lay in my bosom
Hath grown to a maiden fair.

“And now, if out of the glory
Her face, like a star, should shine,
Could I guess the beautiful changeling
Had ever on earth been mine?”

I should veil my eyes at her splendor,
But never forget my lack
For the clinging hands of my baby,
And the mouth that kissed me back.

Yet though, in my human blindness,
I cannot fathom His way
Who counts, in His glorious cycles,
A thousand years as a day,
Whenever the cloud is lifted,
Whenever I cross the tide,
Mine own He will surely give me,
And I shall be satisfied.

Her World.

Behind them slowly sank the western world,
Before them new horizons opened wide;
"Yonder," he said, "old Rome and Venice
wait,
And lovely Florence by the Arno's tide."
She heard, but backward all her heart had
sped,
Where the young moon sailed through the
sunset red;
"Yonder," she thought, "*with breathing soft
and deep,
My little lad lies smiling in his sleep.*"

They sailed where Capri dreamed upon the
sea,
And Naples slept beneath her olive trees;
They saw the plains where trod the gods of
old,
Pink with the flush of wild anemones.
They saw the marbles by the master wrought
To shrine the heavenly beauty of his thought.
Still rang one longing through her smiles and
sighs:
"*If I could see my little lad's sweet eyes!*"

Down from her shrine the dear Madonna
gazed,

Her baby lying warm against her breast.

"What does she see?" he whispered; "can
she guess

The cruel thorns to those soft temples
pressed?"

"Ah, no," she said; "she shuts him safe
from harms,

Within the love-locked harbor of her arms.

*No fear of coming fate could make me sad,
If so, tonight, I held my little lad."*

"if you could choose," he said, "a royal
boon,

Like that girl dancing yonder for the king,

What gift from all her kingdom would you
bid

Obedient Fortune in her hand to bring?"

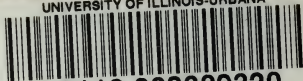
The dancer's robe, the glittering banquet hall
Swam in a mist of tears along the wall.

"*Not power,*" she said, "*nor riches nor de-
light,*

But just to kiss my little lad tonight!"



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